

The Professionalisation of MPs: Refining the ‘Politics-Facilitating’ Explanation

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The term ‘politics-facilitating occupation’ is used widely but loosely in the MP recruitment literature. Comparative evidence suggests that this term has a different meaning according to the country, parliament and time period in which it is evoked. Most discussions do not fully explore party differences or distinguish between brokerage and instrumental occupations (used as a means to an elected end). This study analyses differing conceptions of politics-facilitating occupations and assesses their value in tracking change over time in the UK. It then explores innovative ways to identify the importance of the instrumental category. A sole focus on formative occupation oversimplifies the data while the analysis of multiple occupations combined with occupation immediately before election highlights a significance not identified in the literature. While previous studies have highlighted occupations as ‘stepping stones’ to elected office, this is the first to quantify their significance fully.

The literature on occupational backgrounds of elected representatives suggests widespread convergence towards professional or middle class members of parliament (MPs) in modern industrialised democracies. Best and Cotta’s study of 11 West European countries from 1848-2000 charts the shift from rural and agrarian elites (often with aristocratic backgrounds) to a political elite recruited from the urban middle classes.¹ The studies of Best and Cotta and Norris (which extends analysis to North America, the Antipodes and Japan) suggest that extremes of representation are in decline, since the professionalisation of elected representative backgrounds also excludes working class representation over time.² Mellors suggests that the ‘communicating professions’ - law, education and journalism - dominate most

parliamentary democracies and notes the irony in the UK of greater social mobility within the population but a narrowing recruitment base for MPs.³ In the Scottish Parliament devolution has actually *accelerated* European trends towards professionalisation despite the ‘new politics’ agenda of widening participation.⁴

Within this argument is the idea of ‘politics-facilitating’ occupations, held to explain the overrepresentation of certain professions (most notably in law, politics, journalism and education) often as part of a typical career path. Saalfeld’s discussion of Germany suggests that this begins with a university education followed by entry into a politics-facilitating profession which helps develop skills in communication and access to political networks. Then s/he acquires party leadership and/ or electoral office in local government as a springboard to mid-level elite positions (Landtag or Bundestag), keeping the local elected position to maintain a local power base.⁵ This path can be discerned from Best and Cotta’s discussion of trends from 1970-1990. The typical European representative has a university degree and middle class/ professional background; more MPs perform a mediating rather than directly representative role, with business and manual workers less well represented and replaced by public sector employees (reflecting the size of the state in most European countries). There are significant levels of party leadership and local elected representation, while the mean age of MPs (early 40s) suggests a short but significant occupation before election.⁶ The ‘brokerage’ explanation - or the skills developed, flexibility, money earned and contacts made in politics-facilitating occupations – is also well established in the literature.⁷

However, there are three main problems with this literature. First, terms such as ‘politics-facilitating-occupation’, ‘professional’ and ‘middle class’ are broad and used too loosely. As a result, the comparative evidence over time is not cumulative and politics-facilitating has a different meaning according to the country, party and level of assembly in which the term is evoked. In the UK Conservative party it refers to landowners in the 19th century but barristers and company directors in the 20th. For Labour in Westminster the manual occupations were politics-facilitating in the early 20th century. For post-war Labour MPs there is a shift to lecturers, while for Labour in the Scottish Parliament there are far more teachers and social workers. The danger is that we miss important trends or differences within a broad thesis on elite background convergence, especially if the term refers to the backgrounds of most MPs at a particular time rather than the properties of those occupations. If we extend this to comparative study then the problems are compounded. In the US and Germany politics-facilitating may include the public or civil service but in the UK and Japan the law prevents civil servants running for elections. The levels of politicisation, status and definitions of civil service also vary markedly by country.⁸ In Western Europe the trend is towards declining or minority levels of managerial, business and legal backgrounds but this is far less significant in France, the UK and the US.⁹

Second, the term ‘politics-facilitating’ conflates occupations which are either conducive to seeking political office or directly related to it. This article promotes greater clarity by distinguishing between the *brokerage* occupations which are traditionally found within the ‘professional’ category (barrister, solicitor, lecturer, teacher) and *instrumental* occupations which have a clearer link to politics and may be used as a stepping stone towards elected office.¹⁰ As King suggests, ‘Either people

will have entered a specific occupation in the belief that it would assist them in making a career of politics, or else, having entered the occupation for some other reason they will have discovered at some later stage that politics is a natural and attractive next step'.¹¹ Instrumental occupations are perceived to be of value as an aid to election by those choosing the occupation. This has traditionally included journalism and public relations since there is a clear link to politics and 'training in ... the arts of persuasion or publicity'¹², but also includes those occupations which provide an apprenticeship for higher elected office (trade union official, interest group representative, full-time councillor or MEP) or have obvious links to existing decision-makers (party worker, MP assistant, quango, think tank). It does not include law and education since these professions involve significant barriers to entry (such as extensive training and professional commitments) and a much less direct link with politics *when the choice of occupation is taken*. The advantage to the separation is that it allows studies of the broad importance of the traditional or middle class professional backgrounds to be supplemented with detailed tracking of the significance of occupations hitherto included under 'other' or 'miscellaneous' categories. The hypothesis is that although post-war levels of 'politics-facilitating' occupational backgrounds remain consistently high, this occurs because of a rise in instrumental occupations but despite a decline in brokerage occupations. Woodrow Wilson's oft-cited remark that 'The profession I chose was politics; the profession I entered was the law' may need to be updated.¹³

Third, although the importance of these instrumental or 'stepping stone' occupations has been highlighted in the literature¹⁴, few attempts have been made to quantify the rise in these occupations systematically. In part this is because there are

methodological problems in the identification of occupation.¹⁵ Mellors suggests noting only one formative occupational background, with some judgement required when an MP has multiple occupations.¹⁶ This approach has been followed in much of the UK literature¹⁷ but not Shephard et al which combines all occupations or Rush which lists occupation immediately before election.¹⁸ Formative occupation presents an immediate problem of decision when the length of time of multiple occupations are similar or when the formative occupation may have ended over a decade before election. Take the example of David Anderson MP, who was a mining engineer from 1969-89 but then retrained as an elderly care worker from 1989-2004 and had an active trade union background throughout. Although mining is the formative occupation it may not present the best explanation for successful candidacy. Particular discretion is also required to decide when a skilled worker involved in trade union activities becomes a trade unionist rather than a skilled worker. While Mellors and Keating and Cairney identify a significant number of trade union officials in formative occupation figures,¹⁹ the *British General Election* series and Norris and Lovenduski do not.²⁰

Formative occupation may be used as an indicator of the values an MP has and how these affect policy and debate choices within Parliament. We may also look to 'professional' backgrounds for an explanation of changing practices and a heightened expectation of professional autonomy.²¹ However, to examine the use of occupation as a *stepping stone* we also need to note the jobs taken outwith the formative occupation and immediately preceding election. The occupation held at the time of seeking candidacy may be the most relevant factor to selectors,²² or a brief spell as a political worker may be more relevant to explain a successful candidacy. Without this

supplementary analysis we may produce misleading results about the politics-facilitating value of some occupations. For example, many MPs with a legal background have more direct links to politics in other jobs. Jack Straw qualified as a barrister but inherited Barbara Castle's seat following a spell as her advisor; Douglas Alexander was Gordon Brown's parliamentary researcher; Eleanor Laing served for 5 years as an advisor to former Conservative minister John MacGregor; David Ruffley was special advisor to former Conservative minister Ken Clarke for the 6 years before his election; and Edward Leigh was a councillor who worked in the Conservative Research Department before his first candidacy, and then in Margaret Thatcher's opposition office before being elected (and then called to the bar).

There are similar examples which exaggerate the politics-facilitating nature of school teaching. Anne Begg began life as an English teacher, but then rose through the ranks of Scotland's largest teaching union (the Educational Institute of Scotland); Kevin Brennan was a teacher for 9 years but also a research assistant to Rhodri Morgan; Wayne David spent his formative teaching years with the Workers' Educational Association (adult education services founded by trade unions) and served as an MEP; while Michael Connarty, Tony Cunningham (also an MEP), Rosemary McKenna, Jeff Ennis and Michael Hall were all council leaders before becoming MPs.

Further, while manual occupations are the 'big losers'²³ of the professionalisation of politics and it has been a long time since significant numbers of Labour MPs were drawn from manual occupations, the success of this route may even be exaggerated. Of the 25 MPs listed as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, 19 (76%) had also served for a significant spell in occupations more directly related to politics. The

largest number (11) spent time as trade unionists, with the remainder (8) serving as fulltime councillors or political workers.

Therefore, the recording of multiple occupations is more precise, allowing us to qualify the significance of many occupations traditionally thought of as politics-facilitating, and demonstrate the significance of instrumental occupations throughout the career and immediately before election. The hypothesis is that an examination of multiple occupations highlights a greater significance of instrumental occupations than formative occupation suggests.

FROM BROKERAGE TO INSTRUMENTAL FACTORS IN THE UK

Brokerage explains post-war convergence towards a middle class professional background in Conservative and Labour MPs. In the early 19th century the pool of potential MPs was relatively low - given the various legal restrictions and the expense of spending time as an MP - while the range of backgrounds acceptable to party selectors was limited. The Conservative party in particular was dominated by MPs with aristocratic links and landed interests. In the late 19th century this link was undermined by electoral reform and agricultural depression and by the post-war period barristers and company directors were most represented.²⁴ The legal profession (19%) and business backgrounds (43%) still account for the majority of Conservative MPs.

In contrast, the Labour party was formed to ensure working class representation and from 1900-18 almost 90% of Labour MPs had been manual workers.²⁵ However by 1945 only 41% of MPs had a manual background, falling to 28% in October 1974 and

9% by 2005 (two-thirds of which also served as trade union officials) with only one new MP with a manual background (David Anderson). From 1945-74 manual workers were replaced by the professions²⁶ and teacher/ lecturer has been the biggest occupational category for Labour MPs since 1992.²⁷ Mellors ties the early rise of school teacher representation to generational changes in the population, with teaching a common and realistic aspiration of the children of lower middle class and ‘rising sons of working class families’.²⁸ This fits well with the European picture of education as high status and linked to the labour movement’s public sector ethos²⁹ as well as Bochel and Denver’s study of Labour Party candidate selection. This research suggests that candidate selectors struggle to marry a suspicion of middle class candidates with a desire to select someone well educated and articulate.³⁰ The school teacher fulfils the requirement of a university educated/ middle class MP with a family background that enables them to stay in touch with and represent the working classes.

However, more recent analysis focuses on ‘supply-side’ explanations, with Norris and Lovenduski pointing to the qualities inherent in brokerage occupations:

Parliamentary careers are facilitated by jobs which combine flexibility over time, generous vacations, interrupted career-paths, professional independence, financial security, public networks, social status, policy experience and technical skills useful in political life. Brokerage jobs – barristers, teachers, trade union officials, journalists, political researchers – are complementary to politics.³¹

The discussion of brokerage explains why some occupations are well represented in both parties (although the mix of occupations differs) and Norris and Lovenduski’s interviews reinforce the idea of supportive employers or flexible hours in education

and law (although their survey data is less supportive).³² Yet the difficulty is that this conflates too many explanations for electoral success without enough discussion of their relative merits or the mix of attributes for each profession. Further, recent trends in the demands of brokerage occupations and parliamentary careers increases the significance of the distinction between occupations *conducive* to seeking political office and those *chosen* for their more direct link to electoral success.³³ The professional occupations such as barrister, lecturer or school teacher do not sit well with occupations such as party worker or interest group representative in an explanation of the rise in politics-facilitating occupations. There is a barrier to entry (e.g. education and training) to the education and legal professions. This distinguishes them from the miscellaneous politics-facilitating professions which are often short-term and immediately precede standing for election. Riddell highlights the early stage at which a political career is chosen, and the changing pool of recruitment which allows aspiring candidates to bypass the professions:

As in America, a whole series of ancillary occupations has grown ... to act in part as stepping stones to careers in the Commons. Parliament has changed as a result ... The ambitious have increasingly chosen jobs related to politics. The list includes trade union officials, full-time councillors, public affairs and political consultants, members of policy think tanks, special advisers to ministers and shadow spokesmen and members of the staffs of the parties.³⁴

Jun suggests that a political class surrounds and acts as a source of recruitment of MP candidates, replacing the traditional politics-facilitating occupations of teaching, law and business.³⁵ Candidates do not have to 'prove themselves' in another occupation before being elected.³⁶ The political career begins earlier, candidates are younger and

they work in professions in and around politics.³⁷ In part this is down to two main changes. First, the demands of representation have changed. Riddell suggests that it is increasingly unlikely that MPs can juggle representation with a successful career in another industry. Indeed, we may go further to suggest that even modern *candidates* struggle to juggle campaigning with employment. This is particularly the case with ‘targeted seats’, when candidates are chosen as soon as possible to build up a local presence. The expectation that such candidates treat their campaigning semi-professionally for several years has an effect on recruitment and supply.³⁸ Second, the terms and conditions of MPs have changed. Jun suggests that until recently in the UK there was no financial incentive to form a political class since wages were relatively low compared to Germany and the US.³⁹ The modern allowance system was introduced in 1969, the Top Salaries Review Board’s recommendations on MP wages were implemented in 1971, MP wages linked to civil service pay in 1989 and increased significantly from 1996-2000.

The idea of rising instrumental occupations (perhaps at the expense of brokerage jobs) is therefore already established in the literature. However, neither Jun nor Riddell quantify this rise in a systematic way. There is also little attention given to factors causing party differences in occupation. First, the starting points are different. A complete turnover of MPs within major parties takes decades and so a private/ public sector recruitment difference will still be apparent in the two main parties, while professionalisation may be possible in a shorter space of time for the previously small but growing Liberal Democrats.⁴⁰ Second, party rules on candidate selection may affect occupational backgrounds. While ‘grass-roots members have always exercised considerable autonomy’ in candidate selection in the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties,⁴¹ the trend in Labour selection is towards centralisation. As Shaw

suggests, the Labour Party in particular used the need for new party rules to produce regional candidate lists for European and devolved assemblies as an opportunity to rewrite the rules for Westminster.⁴² This involved new vetting procedures to produce approved candidates, focussing on the promotion of female and ethnic minority candidates as well as the idea of ‘quality’. In practice the latter means that candidates should be good communicators able to act as ‘ambassadors for the government’. The main beneficiaries are those with existing connections to government:

Policy and public relations advisors to MPs, former and current officials at Millbank, researchers in Labour-linked think tanks such as Demos, the Fabian Society and the Institute for Public Policy Research, members of the new public relations consultancies that have sprung up over the last decade or so, and political appointees at Number 10 and in the ministries.⁴³

Third, the attitudes of parties towards occupational backgrounds may differ. For example, the Conservative strategy from 2001 to encourage relatively old and financially secure candidates from the ‘non-political professions, such as the army or business’, continued its concerns before the 1997 election that the selection process was ‘producing “clones” – professional politicians who had worked as special advisers to ministers, party apparatchiks or lobbyists and consultants, but had no experience outside politics’.⁴⁴ Further, local Conservative associations still place great store on candidates ‘proving themselves’ outside of politics before being accepted as candidates.⁴⁵ This, perhaps combined with the need for candidates to demonstrate a long-term commitment to target seats, suggests significant recruitment from business, with candidates owning (or in senior positions within) companies,

possessing the means to fund a second career and relatively able to dictate their workload.

Therefore, while there may be a general trend towards the ‘professionalisation’ of elected representatives, these factors suggest caution in attributing the same trends to the whole House rather than particular parties within it. The greater likelihood of instrumental backgrounds within Labour MPs may contrast with relatively low levels of ‘politics-facilitating’ professions amongst Conservative MPs. But how do we measure these trends?

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Table 1 highlights the variation in politics-facilitating occupations identified in the literature. The lists of brokerage occupations are similar but King does not include trade unionists or party workers while Norris and Lovenduski do not make clear if all legal and communications (or political worker) occupations are relevant.⁴⁶ Saalfeld’s definition is unclear since there is no distinction between short-term political appointments and longer term careers in public service.⁴⁷ Further, in Germany the civil service includes lecturers and teachers but may also refer to social workers (while in France civil service includes the health service and in Sweden it covers local government).⁴⁸ The general confusion would increase if we considered Herrnson’s discussion of the US House of Representatives in which law and politics/ public service were politics-facilitating but educators only enjoyed a ‘modicum of success’, or Rush’s and Shephard et al’s inclusion of a business background as politics-facilitating for UK Conservatives.⁴⁹ The instrumental occupations are made clearer

by Jun but this account is not precise or extensive since his primary interest is a broad thesis on the growth of a political class.⁵⁰ Riddell provides a convincing demonstration of occupations used as a stepping stone to political life but fails to support this with systematic data or a clear distinction between stepping stone occupations, brokerage and ‘proper jobs’.⁵¹ Cairney and Keating’s focus is on post-war shifts in middle class and professional representation, maintaining a professional class category including the traditional brokerage occupations (to tie-in with the existing literature), but with a separate category for ‘other politics-facilitating’ posts (hereafter termed ‘instrumental politics-facilitating’).⁵² The separation allows exploration of the relative importance of instrumental occupation categories over time. All of the occupations in this category have a direct link to politics and the category as a whole should be clear enough to be applied in comparative studies (with idiosyncrasies, such as the importance of business to Conservative MPs, discussed on a supplementary basis).

To explore the rise of these occupations we can use a range of measures:

1. Analysis of numbers of MPs in politics-facilitating occupations as a formative occupation over time, drawing on the existing literature but distinguishing between brokerage and instrumental categories.
2. Separating the new MPs in 2005 and comparing their formative occupations with those of incumbents and outgoing MPs.
3. Analysing the new instrumental category as a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and combined occupation, or occupation immediately preceding election.

THE EVIDENCE: FORMATIVE OCCUPATIONS OVER TIME

The long-term analysis of formative occupation suggests that instrumental occupations are becoming more significant and brokerage occupations are in decline. This trend is masked by a broader focus on ‘politics-facilitating occupations’. Tables 2-4 update King’s analysis, disaggregate by party (highlighting law and education differences) and add political worker to take Norris and Lovenduski’s expanded definition into account (although trade union figures are not available in this series). Table 2 supports King’s suggestion that backgrounds in law, education and journalism/ PR rose in the early post-war period for Conservative and Labour MPs, from 33.3% in 1951 to 41.4% in October 1974, with most of the increase coming from the ‘Communicators’ (education, journalism, PR).⁵³ However, since then King’s categories have shown signs of decline, returning in 2005 to early post-war levels (33.8%). The expanded total only shows signs of growth because of the significant rise of political workers⁵⁴ from 3.1% in 1983 to 14.5% in 2005. Most decline is apparent in the barrister category, with law less well represented than education since 1987. As the figures from 1997 in particular show, part of this shift from law to education is caused by the swing towards the Labour party. This demonstrates the effect of electoral swings on the occupational background of the House and the need for disaggregation by party.

Table 3 on Labour MPs shows the shift in recruitment towards education from the late 1950s, with educators rising to over double the amount of lawyers by 1979 and treble by 1983. However, much of this change in the last 10-15 years has been caused by a decline in legal background rather than a rise in educators. Indeed after 1997

education has shown signs of decline. This is reflected in the total figures, with King's politics-facilitating occupations falling from a peak of 45.3% in 1970 to a figure in 2005 (35.5%) which is lower than the levels in 1951 (39.0%). The total from the expanded definition shows similar decline from 1970 to 1983, only to rise again and reach a peak of 52.4% in reflection of the rise of political workers, from 3.3% in 1983 to 16.9% in 2005. Table 3 therefore suggests that while the 'politics-facilitating occupations' may still account for over half of all occupational backgrounds, there are significant trends within the figures. Brokerage occupations are in decline and being replaced by occupations with a much more direct link to politics.

The Conservative party figures in Table 4 demonstrate a far greater reliance on legal backgrounds compared to education despite the decline in barristers from 1979. The trends in Conservative figures are similar to Labour, with King's categories rising from 28.0% in 1951 to a peak of 38.4% in 1974 but then falling in 2005 to 30.8%. If we expand the definition then the figures rise slightly from 1974-2005 as a result of the cumulative rise in political workers. In tables 2-4 we therefore see that the trends identified by King in 1981 did not continue. The levels of legal and educational background are in decline and only the rise in political workers (most notably within Labour) maintains the high levels of politics-facilitating backgrounds in 2005.

TABLES 2-4 ABOUT HERE

Tables 5 and 6 use figures from a different source⁵⁵ to separate some categories and include trade union officials as well as Saalfeld's politics-facilitating occupations.

Table 5 shows the decline in law, education and journalist backgrounds in Labour MPs from 1974-2005.⁵⁶ Interestingly, the only categories other than political worker which show significant increases are in civil service/ local government (to a level resembling the proportion of the working population) and social work. The rise of the latter is partly attributable to a broadened category (including community and youth workers) but also greater representation for women.⁵⁷ This explains why Saalfeld's categories are less in decline than King's which show most clearly the rise and fall of brokerage occupations. In contrast, the instrumental category has risen significantly, with political worker replacing trade union official as the most represented.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

For Conservative MPs the decline is not apparent from 1974-2005 given the rise of solicitors and a small rise in education and communication which offsets the fall in barristers. Political workers have more than doubled from a small base and in each total of politics-facilitating occupations there has been a steady rise from 1945-2005. The rise is most significant in the instrumental occupations, although (even if we ignore trade union officials in Table 5) the proportion of MPs in this category is significantly lower among Conservative MPs, with law a more likely occupation before election (note that company directors account for 20% and business as a whole 43%). Table 6 also demonstrates the reliability question in the selection of formative occupations, with the author calculations⁵⁸ of political workers significantly lower than those recorded in the *British General Election* series. This reinforces the need to focus on more than one indicator.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

FORMATIVE OCCUPATIONS OF NEW AND DEPARTING MPS

While tables 2-6 show the rise of instrumental occupations, a low turnover of MPs understates their significance. As Mellors suggests, the direction of change may be more apparent at the margins.⁵⁹ Table 7 makes the distinction between successful incumbent, outgoing and incoming Labour MPs. This shows a clearer rise in the instrumental background to almost half of new entrants (47.6%, or 40% if we exclude trade union officials), while this background is lowest in outgoing MPs (21.2%). In contrast, the traditional professional background (including educators and lawyers – see note 26) shows signs of decline, accounting for 38.1% of new entrants compared to 56.6% of outgoing MPs. For manual backgrounds the incoming figure of 2.4% represents one new MP, while there is some rise in business background.

TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE

For the Conservatives the level of professional background is low among new MPs (33.3%) and high among outgoing MPs (40.9%). However, there is also a steep fall in the proportion of new MPs with an instrumental occupation (only 7.8%). Much of this can be explained by the significance of business representation (51%) among new recruits. Again, these figures demonstrate the significance of disaggregation by party. The increased use of an instrumental route to politics so notable within the Labour party is less apparent among the Conservatives party still (or increasingly) associated with the private/ business sector.⁶⁰

TABLE 8 ABOUT HERE

MULTIPLE AND COMBINED INSTRUMENTAL OCCUPATIONS

A focus on formative occupation alone may miss the use of some jobs as a means to an end, with MPs beginning life or even spending most of their life in one job before choosing another before election. Table 9 addresses this problem by listing first, second and third careers and comparing them with formative occupation for the three major parties. It also highlights the number of instrumental posts as a proportion of all occupations listed, the occupation listed immediately before election and whether or not an MP had been employed in a politics-facilitating occupation throughout her/his (pre-election) career. In most accounts of MP background these nuances are missed and the importance of certain occupations is underestimated.

For all parties the experience in politics-facilitating occupations is higher than formative occupation suggests, and we see what appears to be an increasing tendency to choose an instrumental occupation from first to third occupation. However, some caution should be applied. While for example over 55% of Labour MPs *who had a third career* chose this occupation, this represents only 13.2% of all Labour MPs. A clearer picture can be found in combined occupation which lists politics-facilitating as a proportion of all jobs listed (36%).⁶¹ The proportion of Labour MPs who were employed in a politics-facilitating occupation immediately before election was 44.8% (almost 50% more than formative occupation) while the number employed during their pre-election career was 55.5%.⁶²

For the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats there are fewer in the instrumental occupations at all stages (partly because there are no trade union officials). However, the figures still show a similar path – an increased tendency to choose one of these occupations as part of a career path and a higher proportion of instrumental occupations if we observe the proportion of all jobs listed rather than formative occupation. The levels are higher among Liberal Democrat MPs, with 31.1% in post immediately before election and over 44% having held a politics-facilitating occupation at some stage before election. Although the figures are lower for Conservative MPs, they show the value of observing multiple occupations. The number of Conservative MPs in a politics-facilitating occupation immediately before election (25.6%) is double that of formative occupation (12.8%), while the number in this occupation at some point before election is almost treble that amount (37.4%).

TABLE 9 ABOUT HERE

If we look at occupations held immediately before election more closely (table 10) then the instrumental category now outnumbers the professions for all parties. The biggest shift is within Labour since the professions accounted for 44% of all formative backgrounds (compared to 32% in the instrumental occupations). While education as a whole is still the most represented before election (15.5%), the largest single categories are now political workers⁶³ (13.0%), trade union officials (12.1%) and then lecturers/ researchers (11.3%).⁶⁴ For Liberal Democrat MPs, most formative occupations are in the professions (37%) with politics-facilitating occupations at 27% and business 24%.⁶⁵ Immediately before election the professions and business are still well represented at 27.9% but politics-facilitating is highest at 31.1%. For the

Conservatives, while politics-facilitating occupations exceed the professions in Westminster, the most significant category immediately before election is business. Indeed, company directors alone (47, or 24.6%) match politics-facilitating, while there were still as many from the legal profession (12.8%) as political workers (12.3%). Therefore, again, while a shift of focus from formative occupation to other indicators highlights a much greater significance for the instrumental occupations, there are still clear party differences.

TABLE 10 ABOUT HERE

This difference even extends to the link between occupations and safe seats – a factor only apparent in the Labour party.⁶⁶ These links are clear when, for example, an MP in a safe seat is succeeded by his/ her assistant or special advisor. However, table 11 suggests that for each indicator the instrumental occupations as a whole command a disproportionate number of safe seats.⁶⁷ For example, while politics-facilitating accounts for 31.5% of all formative occupations, these MPs hold 44.8% of the safe seats. While 38% of Labour MPs as a whole hold a safe seat, just over half of Labour MPs with politics-facilitating as a formative occupation do so. Greater success for formative occupation rather than job held immediately before election suggests that the length of time served in these occupations affects the likelihood of selection in a safe seat.⁶⁸

TABLE 11 ABOUT HERE

CONCLUSION

All of the indicators of MP background confirm a broad picture of the ‘professionalisation of politics’, with two major qualifications. First, the maintenance of high levels of politics-facilitating occupations has occurred because of increasing levels of instrumental posts but despite falling levels of brokerage occupations. This is most apparent when we examine occupation immediately before election. The analysis suggests that the continued politics-facilitating value of brokerage jobs is exaggerated by a focus on formative occupation and a low turnover of MPs. When we examine the backgrounds of new MPs and multiple occupations the rise of instrumental jobs is most clear.

Second, there are clear party differences in occupational background linked to differing attitudes towards candidate selection. For the Labour party the figures suggest further swings in occupational background – from the working classes at its inception, to the professions in the post-war period and now to the instrumental politics-facilitating in the 21st century. In contrast, Conservative party backgrounds are relatively stable, with a steady rise in business backgrounds that can be traced back to the 19th century.⁶⁹ Much of the analysis of occupation therefore hinges on the relative fortunes of the major parties, with a large part of the lurch towards new politics-facilitating occupations caused by a change of government since 1997. Any future swing from Labour to Conservative has the potential to dramatically alter the occupational background of the House.

While the aim of this article is to clarify the nature of MP professionalisation, the analysis may also inform wider debates on representation and party organisation. First, the figures suggest further restrictions on the pool of recruitment and declining

levels of microcosmic representation. However, the choice of most important social characteristics and the value of this form of representation have never been resolved (for example, greater representation by gender at the expense of class may be acceptable to many).⁷⁰ It is not inevitable that greater party centralisation or an increased social distance between MP and constituency will lead to parties abandoning the preferences of voters.⁷¹ Indeed if MPs attempt to compensate for their perceived detachment from their constituencies this may engender a greater sensitivity to groundswells of opinion. Therefore, the rise of the instrumental occupation may signal a shift in MP behaviour, but the direction is not straightforward. Further research is also required to determine if these results are replicated under PR systems of election. From the discussion of the role of Labour party centralisation and the production of ‘clones’, a reasonable hypothesis is that this shift in occupation is likely to be more apparent under PR systems with centrally controlled lists. This presents an interesting dilemma – is better representation of parties more important than representation by social class and occupation?

Second, the evidence may allay fears about the applicability in the UK of the ‘cartel-party’ thesis. This refers to a response to crisis by the major parties (caused by factors such as rising campaign costs but declining voter participation). These parties have a common interest in maintaining their positions and excluding newer/ smaller parties, and do so by colluding with the state (which may, for example, regulate campaign rules and fund the main parties). The thesis stresses a (worrying) common interest between major party elites in maintaining a closed relationship with the state and excluding the broader party membership and wider population.⁷² While it tends to be less applicable to the UK given relatively low levels of state support to parties, the

call for state funding is a common response to crises of confidence in party management (as in the recent ‘cash for peerages’ coverage).⁷³ This opens up the prospect of collusion between major parties, particularly if their elites are part of the same professional class.

However, the analysis shows to some extent that Labour and Conservative parties are travelling in opposite directions when it comes to recruitment. As a result, clear differences in background between Labour and the Conservatives may even become an election issue if there is less to distinguish between the parties on ideology or policy.⁷⁴ The, perhaps ironic, conclusion is that a more detailed picture of the ‘professionalisation of politics’ can be used to challenge traditional concerns over party organisation and collusion. While less precise discussions of recruitment point to homogeneity across parties and countries, leading to a greater distance between the state and society, this analysis highlights the prospect of public attention to recruitment and a favourable party response.

1. The Politics-Facilitating Occupations

| Saalfeld | King | Norris/ Lovenduski | Jun | Riddell | Keating/ Cairney |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----|---------|---------------------|
| Barrister | Barrister | Barrister | | | |
| Solicitor | Solicitor | [Solicitor] | | | |

Civil Service

Local Government

Lecturer Lecturer Lecturer

Teacher Teacher Teacher

Social Worker?

Political
Worker
Trade Union

Political
Worker

Political
Worker
Trade Union

Political
Worker
Trade Union

Journalist Journalist Journalist

Journalist

PR PR [PR]

PR PR

Quango

MEP

MEP

MEP

FT Councillor

FT Councillor

FT Councillor

Interest group

Interest group

Interest group

Think tank

Think tank

Think tank

2. Labour and Conservative MPs in Politics-Facilitating Occupations 1951-2005

| % | 1951 | 1955 | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 | 1974 | 1974 | 1979 | 1983 | 1987 | 1992 | 1997 | 2001 | 2005 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | | | | | | | | Feb | Oct | | | | | | |
| Barrister | 14.4 | 15.0 | 15.9 | 15.2 | 14.8 | 15.2 | 15.1 | 14.6 | 10.9 | 10.7 | 8.6 | 7.9 | 5.5 | 5.4 | 5.8 |
| Solicitor | 3.7 | 3.2 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 5.4 | 4.4 | 3.7 | 3.5 | 4.8 | 5.6 | 5.0 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 5.4 | 6.5 |
| Lecturer | 4.5 | 2.6 | 3.0 | 3.5 | 6.5 | 4.2 | 5.4 | 7.2 | 4.4 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 10.8 | 9.5 | 7.8 |
| Teacher | 3.1 | 4.3 | 3.5 | 5.4 | 5.8 | 6.3 | 7.2 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 6.8 | 7.6 | 8.9 | 10.5 | 9.5 | 6.9 |
| Journalist/ PR | 7.5 | 7.4 | 8.2 | 7.4 | 5.0 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 8.2 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 7.4 | 8.0 | 6.9 |
| Total 1 | 33.3 | 32.5 | 34.5 | 36.1 | 37.5 | 39.4 | 40.5 | 41.4 | 35.0 | 35.5 | 34.2 | 35.9 | 38.6 | 37.7 | 33.8 |
| Political Worker | 2.9 | 3.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 1.5 | 3.4 | 2.2 | 2.0 | 3.5 | 3.1 | 5.5 | 7.2 | 9.4 | 10.7 | 14.5 |
| Total 2 | 36.2 | 36.4 | 37.4 | 39.0 | 39.0 | 42.8 | 42.6 | 43.5 | 38.5 | 38.6 | 39.7 | 43.2 | 48.0 | 48.4 | 48.3 |
| Law % of total 1 | 54.6 | 55.9 | 57.2 | 54.8 | 53.7 | 49.8 | 46.3 | 43.7 | 44.6 | 46.0 | 39.6 | 35.3 | 25.8 | 28.4 | 36.4 |
| Education % | 22.9 | 21.3 | 19.1 | 24.6 | 32.9 | 26.7 | 31.0 | 36.4 | 34.7 | 35.3 | 41.1 | 45.9 | 55.1 | 50.5 | 43.3 |
| n | 616 | 621 | 623 | 631 | 616 | 617 | 598 | 596 | 608 | 606 | 605 | 607 | 583 | 578 | 553 |

Source: The *British General Election Series*. Earlier volumes do not provide consistent data. Total 1 excludes and total 2 includes political worker.

3. Labour MPs in Politics-Facilitating Occupations 1951-2005

| % | 1951 | 1955 | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 | 1974 Feb | 1974 Oct | 1979 | 1983 | 1987 | 1992 | 1997 | 2001 | 2005 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Barrister | 9.5 | 9.7 | 10.5 | 9.5 | 9.9 | 11.8 | 10.3 | 10.0 | 5.6 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 3.2 | 2.8 |
| Solicitor | 4.1 | 3.2 | 3.9 | 4.6 | 5.0 | 4.5 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 3.0 | 4.1 | 4.4 | 5.1 |
| Lecturer | 8.1 | 5.1 | 5.4 | 5.8 | 10.7 | 8.0 | 9.6 | 12.5 | 7.4 | 12.0 | 12.2 | 14.0 | 14.4 | 12.6 | 11.8 |
| Teacher | 6.1 | 9.0 | 8.5 | 9.8 | 9.1 | 11.5 | 12.0 | 11.9 | 13.4 | 12.9 | 12.7 | 14.0 | 12.9 | 11.9 | 9.0 |
| Journalist/ PR | 11.2 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 8.3 | 3.9 | 9.4 | 7.6 | 6.9 | 4.8 | 4.3 | 6.1 | 4.8 | 6.9 | 7.8 | 6.8 |
| Total 1 | 39.0 | 36.8 | 38.0 | 37.9 | 38.6 | 45.3 | 42.5 | 44.2 | 34.9 | 37.3 | 38.9 | 39.1 | 41.1 | 39.8 | 35.5 |
| Political Worker | 2.0 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 1.9 | 3.8 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 4.8 | 3.3 | 5.2 | 8.9 | 9.6 | 10.7 | 16.9 |
| Total 2 | 41.0 | 39.4 | 40.7 | 40.1 | 40.5 | 49.1 | 45.2 | 46.7 | 39.8 | 40.7 | 44.1 | 48.0 | 50.7 | 50.5 | 52.4 |
| Law % of total 1 | 34.8 | 35.3 | 37.8 | 37.1 | 38.6 | 36.2 | 31.3 | 29.1 | 26.6 | 21.8 | 20.2 | 16.0 | 16.9 | 18.9 | 22.2 |
| Education % | 36.5 | 38.2 | 36.7 | 41.1 | 51.4 | 43.1 | 50.8 | 55.3 | 59.6 | 66.7 | 64.0 | 71.7 | 66.3 | 61.6 | 58.7 |
| n | 295 | 277 | 258 | 327 | 363 | 287 | 301 | 319 | 269 | 209 | 229 | 271 | 418 | 412 | 355 |

Source: The *British General Election Series*. Earlier volumes do not provide consistent data. Total 1 excludes and total 2 includes political worker.

4. Conservative MPs in Politics-Facilitating Occupations 1951-2005

| % | 1951 | 1955 | 1959 | 1964 | 1966 | 1970 | 1974 Feb | 1974 Oct | 1979 | 1983 | 1987 | 1992 | 1997 | 2001 | 2005 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Barrister | 19.0 | 19.2 | 19.7 | 21.4 | 21.7 | 18.2 | 19.9 | 19.9 | 15.0 | 14.1 | 11.4 | 11.6 | 12.1 | 10.8 | 11.1 |
| Solicitor | 3.4 | 3.2 | 3.8 | 4.6 | 5.9 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 5.6 | 6.5 | 5.6 | 6.3 | 5.5 | 7.8 | 9.1 |
| Lecturer | 1.2 | 0.6 | 1.4 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 2.1 | 2.5 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 0.5 |
| Teacher | 0.3 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.7 | 1.2 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 4.8 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 3.0 |
| Journalist/ PR | 4.0 | 5.5 | 7.1 | 6.6 | 6.7 | 9.1 | 10.8 | 9.7 | 9.1 | 7.8 | 6.9 | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 7.1 |
| Total 1 | 28.0 | 29.1 | 32.1 | 34.2 | 36.0 | 34.2 | 38.4 | 38.3 | 35.1 | 34.5 | 31.4 | 33.3 | 32.1 | 32.5 | 30.8 |
| Political Worker | 3.7 | 4.9 | 3.0 | 3.6 | 0.8 | 3.0 | 1.7 | 1.4 | 2.4 | 3.0 | 5.6 | 6.0 | 9.1 | 10.8 | 10.1 |
| Total 2 | 31.8 | 34.0 | 35.1 | 37.8 | 36.8 | 37.3 | 40.1 | 39.7 | 37.5 | 37.5 | 37.0 | 39.3 | 41.2 | 43.4 | 40.9 |
| Law % of total 1 | 80.0 | 77.0 | 73.5 | 76.0 | 76.9 | 65.5 | 63.2 | 63.2 | 58.8 | 59.9 | 54.2 | 53.6 | 54.7 | 57.4 | 65.6 |
| Education % | 5.6 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 4.4 | 8.0 | 8.8 | 11.3 | 15.1 | 17.5 | 23.7 | 21.4 | 18.9 | 16.7 | 11.5 |
| n | 321 | 344 | 365 | 304 | 253 | 330 | 297 | 277 | 339 | 397 | 376 | 336 | 165 | 166 | 198 |

Source: The *British General Election Series*. Earlier volumes do not provide consistent data. Total 1 excludes and total 2 includes political worker.

5. Labour MPs in Politics-Facilitating Occupations 1945-2005

| Politics-facilitating occupations % | 1945 | 1974 Oct | 2005 |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------|------|
| Barrister | 8.5 | 8.8 | 3.9 |
| Solicitor | 3.0 | 3.1 | 4.5 |
| Civil Service/ Local Government | 0.8 | 1.6 | 4.5 |
| Lecturer/ Research | 5.0 | 16.3 | 11.3 |
| Teacher | 6.8 | 11.6 | 7.3 |
| Social Worker | 0.0 | 0.9 | 5.6 |
| Political Worker | 0.8 | 2.5 | 14.9 |
| Trade Union Official | 12.5 | 9.7 | 9.9 |
| Journalist/ Author | 9.5 | 7.8 | 5.9 |
| PR/ Communications | 0.5 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| TOTALS | | | |
| King | 33.3 | 48.6 | 33.8 |
| Norris/ Lovenduski | 46.5 | 60.8 | 58.6 |
| Saalfeld | 34.0 | 51.1 | 43.9 |
| Instrumental Politics-Facilitating | 23.3 | 21.0 | 31.5 |
| n | 400 | 319 | 355 |

Note: the n fluctuates slightly according to available information. In this table Political Worker includes FT councillor, MEP, quango and interest group

6. Conservative MPs in Politics-Facilitating Occupations 1945-2005

| Politics-facilitating occupations % | 1945 | 1974 Oct | 2005 |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------|------|
| Barrister | 17.4 | 17.0 | 11.9 |
| Solicitor | 1.9 | 3.2 | 7.2 |
| Civil Service/ Local Government | 1.4 | 0.4 | 1.0 |
| Lecturer/ Research | 2.3 | 1.1 | 2.1 |
| Teacher | 0.5 | 2.2 | 1.5 |
| Social Worker | 0.5 | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Political Worker | 0.5 | 1.8 | 4.1 |
| Journalist/ Author | 2.3 | 6.1 | 5.7 |
| PR/ Communications | 0.0 | 1.8 | 3.1 |
| TOTALS | | | |
| King | 24.4 | 31.4 | 31.4 |
| Norris/ Lovenduski | 24.9 | 33.2 | 35.6 |
| Saalfeld | 26.3 | 31.8 | 33.5 |
| Instrumental Politics-Facilitating | 2.8 | 9.7 | 12.9 |
| n | 213 | 277 | 196 |

7. Incumbent, outgoing and incoming Labour MPs 2005

| % | Incumbent | Outgoing | Incoming |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Professions | 44.8 | 56.6 | 38.1 |
| Business | 6.8 | 6.1 | 11.9 |
| Blue and white collar | 9.4 | 11.1 | 2.4 |
| Instrumental politics facilitating | 29.4 | 21.2 | 47.6 |
| Other misc | 9.7 | 5.1 | 0 |
| n | 312 | 100 | 42 |

8. Incumbent, outgoing and incoming Conservative MPs 2005

| | Incumbent | Outgoing | Incoming |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Professional | 38.0 | 40.9 | 33.3 |
| Business | 40.1 | 27.3 | 51.0 |
| Blue and white collar | 1.4 | 4.5 | 0 |
| Instrumental politics facilitating | 14.8 | 27.3 | 7.8 |
| Other misc | 5.6 | 0 | 7.8 |
| Total | 145 | 22 | 51 |

9. Multiple Occupations by Party

| % Instrumental Politics-facilitating Occupation: | Labour | Conservative | Liberal Democrat |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| First Occupation | 25.3 | 15.4 | 24.6 |
| Second Occupation | 45.0 (30.0) | 31.5 (23.6) | 35.0 (23.0) |
| Third Occupation | 55.3 (13.2) | 37.7 (11.8) | 42.9 (9.8) |
| Combined | 36.0 | 24.6 | 30.4 |
| Before Election | 44.8 | 25.6 | 31.1 |
| During Career | 55.5 | 37.4 | 44.3 |
| Formative | 31.5 | 12.8 | 26.2 |
| n | 355 | 195 | 61 |

Note: for second and third occupation the figures refer to % of all second jobs listed (% of all possible second jobs). Combined occupation refers to all instrumental posts listed divided by all listed posts.

10. Occupation Immediately Before Election

| % | Labour | Conservative | Liberal Democrat |
|-----------------------|--------|--------------|------------------|
| Professions | 33.2 | 22.1 | 27.9 |
| Business | 7.6 | 43.6 | 27.9 |
| Blue and White Collar | 3.1 | 2.1 | 0 |
| Instrumental Politics | 44.8 | 25.6 | 31.1 |
| Facilitating | | | |
| Other | 11.3 | 6.7 | 13.1 |
| n | 355 | 195 | 61 |

11. Safe seats and instrumental occupations for Labour MPs 2005

| Instrumental Politics-Facilitating Occupation: | As % of UK MPs (table 9) | % of all safe seats held | % Likelihood of safe seat selection for: | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------|
| | | | Politics Facilitating | Other Occupations |
| During career | 55.5 | 67.4 | 46.2 | 27.8 |
| Before election | 44.8 | 53.3 | 45.3 | 32.1 |
| Formative | 31.5 | 44.8 | 50.9 | 32.1 |
| n | 355 | 135 | 135 | 135 |

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¹ Heinrich Best and Maurizio Cotta, eds, *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

² Pippa Norris, *Passages to Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 209.

³ Colin Mellors, *The British MP: A Socio-economic Study of the House of Commons* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1978), p.58.

⁴ Michael Keating and Paul Cairney, 'A New Elite? Politicians and Civil Servants in Scotland After Devolution'; *Parliamentary Affairs*, 59 (2006), 1, 1-17, p1.

⁵ Thomas Saalfeld, 'Professionalisation of Parliamentary Roles in Germany: An Aggregate Level Analysis 1949-94' in Thomas Saalfeld, T. and Wolfgang Muller, eds, *Members of Parliament in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p34.

⁶ Best and Cotta, *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe*, pp.497-505.

⁷ Anthony King, 'The Rise of the Career Politician in Britain – and its Consequences'; *British Journal of Political Science*, 11(1981), 3, 249-63, p261; Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment: Gender, Race and Class in the British Parliament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p110; Paul Herrnson, *Congressional Elections: Campaigning at Home and in Washington 4th Edition* (Washington: CQ Press, 2004), p.56 ; Mark Shephard, Neil McGarvey, and Michael Cavanagh, 'New Scottish Parliament, New Scottish Parliamentarians?'; *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 7 (2001), 2, 81-106, pp.84-5.

⁸ Heinrich Best, Valerie Cromwell, Christopher Hausmann and Michael Rush, 'The Transformation of legislative Elites: The Cases of Britain and Germany since the 1860s', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 7(2001), 3, 65-91; Haruhiro Fukui, 'Japan' in Pippa Norris, *Passages to Power*, 98-113; Edward Page and Vincent Wright, eds, *Bureaucratic Elites in Western European States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Best and Cotta, *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe*, pp.497-505; Herrnson, *Congressional Elections*. There is also variation in levels of university background and 'moving up' from local to national office. For the latter see Klaus Stolz, 'Moving up, moving down: Political careers across territorial levels'; *European Journal of Political Research*, 42 (2003), 223-4.

¹⁰ Peter Riddell, *Honest Opportunism: The Rise of the Career Politician* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1993), p.xi.

¹¹ King, 'The Rise of the Career Politician in Britain', p.260.

¹² Herbert Nicholas, *The British General Election of 1950* (London: Frank Cass, 1951), p51.

¹³ See King, 'The Rise of the Career Politician in Britain', p.260.

¹⁴ Riddell, *Honest Opportunism*.

¹⁵ Enough to lead Burch and Moran to reject the use of occupational data for Conservative MPs and to prevent the production of consistent figures in the *British General Election* series until 1951. Martin Burch and Michael Moran, 'The Changing British Political Elite, 1945-83: MPs and Cabinet Ministers'; *Parliamentary Affairs*, 38 (1985), 1, 1-15, p.4.

¹⁶ Mellors, *The British MP*, p.8.

¹⁷ Norris and Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, p.97; the *British General Election* series uses formative occupation consistently from 1951-2005: David Butler, *The British General Election of 1951*, (London: MacMillan, 1952); David Butler, *The British General Election of 1955*, (London: MacMillan, 1955); David Butler and Richard Rose, *The British General Election of 1959*, (London: MacMillan, 1960); David Butler and Anthony King, *The British General Election of 1964*, (London: MacMillan, 1965); David Butler and Anthony King, *The British General Election of 1966* (London: MacMillan, 1966); David Butler and Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British General Election of 1970* (London: MacMillan, 1971); David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of February 1974* (London: MacMillan, 1974); David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of October 1974* (London: MacMillan, 1975); David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, *The British General Election of 1979* (London: MacMillan, 1980); Byron Criddle, 'Candidates' in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, eds, *The British General Election of 1983* (London: MacMillan, 1984); Byron Criddle, 'Candidates' in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, eds, *The British General Election of 1987* (London: MacMillan, 1987); Byron Criddle, 'Candidates' in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, eds, *The British General Election of 1992* (London: MacMillan, 1992); Byron Criddle, 'Candidates' in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, eds, *The British General Election of 1997* (London: MacMillan,

1998); Byron Criddle, 'Candidates' in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, eds, *The British General Election of 2001* (London: MacMillan, 2002); Byron Criddle, 'MPs and Candidates' in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh, eds, *The British General Election of 2005* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

¹⁸ Shephard, McGarvey and Cavanagh, 'New Scottish Parliament, New Scottish Parliamentarians?'; Michael Rush, *The Role of the Member of Parliament Since 1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.225.

¹⁹ Mellors, *The British MP*, p.62; Keating and Cairney, 'A New Elite?'

²⁰ See note 16.

²¹ This was a particular concern regarding the recruitment of lecturers – see Paul Cairney 'Talk it like you walk it', *House Magazine*, 10.04.06.

²² A point made by Michael Rush in correspondence.

²³ Michael Moran, 'Gender, Identity and the Teaching of British Politics: A Comment', *Politics*, 26 (2006), 3, 200–202, p.201

²⁴ Rush, *The Role of the Member of Parliament Since 1868*, pp.83-97; Best, Cromwell, Hausmann and Rush, 'The Transformation of Legislative Elites', p.67; Mellors, *The British MP*, pp.62-3.

²⁵ Rush, *The Role of the Member of Parliament Since 1868*, pp.103-4.

²⁶ Barrister, solicitor, chartered surveyor/ engineer, civil service/ local government, services, diplomatic services, lecturer, school teacher, doctor, dentist, chartered accountant/ secretary, scientific worker, minister of religion, social worker – see Mellors, *The British MP*, p.61.

²⁷ Mellors, *The British MP*, p.74; Best, Cromwell, Hausmann and Rush, 'The Transformation of Legislative Elites', p.77. Teachers and lecturers account for approximately 2.3% of the UK working population; the legal profession is 0.4%.

²⁸ Mellors, *The British MP*, p.76.

²⁹ Best, Cromwell, Hausmann and Rush, 'The Transformation of Legislative Elites', p.78.

³⁰ John Bochel and David Denver, 'Candidate Selection in the Labour Party: What the Selectors Seek', *British Journal of Political Science*, 13 (1983), 1, 45-69, p.57.

³¹ Norris and Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, p.110.

³² The British Representation Survey 2001 category Employer Support *may* cover flexibility, vacations and interrupted career paths. Party official/ political researcher scores highest on very positive and total positive (45%, 81%), but the legal (13, 49) and education (13, 46) professions do less well and rank below manual and business (author calculations from

<http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~pnorris/Data/Data.htm>)

³³ Riddell, *Honest Opportunism*, p.22.

³⁴ Riddell, *Honest Opportunism*, p.xi; p.10.

³⁵ Uwe Jun, 'Great Britain: From the Prevalence of the Amateur to the Dominance of the Professional Politician', in Jens Borchert and Jurgen Zeiss, eds, *The Political Class in Advanced Democracies: A Comparative Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp164-86 at p.170.

³⁶ As described in Michael Rush, *The Selection of Parliamentary Candidates* (London: Nelson, 1969). More recently, Rush highlights the gradual reduction of age at which an MP is first elected but suggests that MPs 'have normally established themselves occupationally outside Parliament before first being elected' - *The Role of the Member of Parliament Since 1868*, p.134.

³⁷ Jun, 'Great Britain', p172.

³⁸ I owe this point to an anonymous referee. For a list by party in 2005 see

http://www.netcoms.com/election2005/target_seats_by_party.asp

³⁹ Riddell, *Honest Opportunism*, p.23; Jun, 'Great Britain', p165-7.

⁴⁰ Although note that it is also difficult to examine long-term trends in the backgrounds of historically small parties.

⁴¹ Paul Webb, *The Modern British Party System* (London: Sage), p.197; 210.

⁴² Eric Shaw, 'New Labour: New Pathways to Parliament', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 54 (2001), 35-53.

⁴³ Shaw, 'New Labour', p49. Criddle, 'MPs and Candidates, 2005', p. 154. also discusses the rise of 'favoured policy advisers and party staffers'.

⁴⁴ Criddle, 'Candidates', 1997, p.195; Criddle, 'Candidates', 2001, pp.193-4.

⁴⁵ A point made by Michael Rush in correspondence.

⁴⁶ King, 'The Rise of the Career Politician in Britain', pp.260-1; Norris and Lovenduski, *Political Recruitment*, p.110.

⁴⁷ Saalfeld, 'Professionalisation of Parliamentary Roles in Germany', p.34.

⁴⁸ See Page and Wright, *Bureaucratic Elites in Western European States*.

- ⁴⁹ Herrnson, *Congressional Elections*, p.56; Michael Rush, 'Career Patterns in British Politics: First Choose Your Party'; *Parliamentary Affairs*, 47 (1994), 4, pp. 566-82; Shephard, McGarvey and Cavanagh, 'New Scottish Parliament, New Scottish Parliamentarians?'
- ⁵⁰ Jun, 'Great Britain', p170.
- ⁵¹ Riddell, *Honest Opportunism*, pp. 118-20.
- ⁵² Keating and Cairney, 'A New Elite?'
- ⁵³ King, 'The Rise of the Career Politician in Britain', p.261. Note that King uses figures from Mellors *The British MP* while tables 2-4 draw on the British General Election series.
- ⁵⁴ Not including TU official, journalism, PR.
- ⁵⁵ Mellors, *The British MP* for 1945-74 and author calculations for 2005. Some occupations – FT councillor, MEP, quango, interest group - are not distinguishable from political worker in Mellors' figures.
- ⁵⁶ Note that the party in government in the years selected does not appear to affect these figures significantly.
- ⁵⁷ 13 of 20 MPs from social work (65%) are women and this accounts for 13.4% of women MPs and 2.7% of men. Fewer differences are apparent with instrumental occupations and the gender of Labour MPs. While more women (34%) listed an instrumental formative occupation than men (30%), fewer held such an occupation immediately before election (43% compared to 45%). Within the latter indicator, more women were political workers (14%, 12%) and fewer were trade union officials (6%, 14%). More men (56%) had held an instrumental position at some point than women (53%).
- ⁵⁸ From *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*.
- ⁵⁹ Mellors, *The British MP*, p7.
- ⁶⁰ The figures for entrants in 2001 qualify this difference. For Labour the professions were 44% and other politics-facilitating 36%. For the Conservatives, business is high (48%) and professions low (27%) but politics-facilitating is 27%.
- ⁶¹ With bias towards numbers rather than length of time. Someone listing 3 careers has 2 more entries than someone listing one.
- ⁶² For the Whole House this figure is 48%. For Cabinet Ministers (3.11.05) it is 70% and formative occupation is 40%.
- ⁶³ Not including FT councillor, MEP, quango, interest group.
- ⁶⁴ King's total also falls with this measure, from 33.8% (table 5) to 29.6%. Saalfeld falls from 43.9% to 38.4%. For the Conservatives, King rises from 31.4% to 32.8% and Saalfeld falls from 33.5% to 33.3%.
- ⁶⁵ See Keating and Cairney, 'A New Elite?'
- ⁶⁶ Safe seat defined as held by the Labour party since at least 1945. 135 of the seats listed by the Electoral Reform Society - <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/news/safeseats.htm> - correspond to the constituencies listed in the author's database, with 220 considered not safe.
- ⁶⁷ The highest levels are for full-time councillors, trade union officials and party workers.
- ⁶⁸ Treating safety of seat and value of occupation as ordinal variables, the gamma value for formative occupation was 0.343.
- ⁶⁹ See Rush, *The Role of the Member of Parliament Since 1868*, p98.
- ⁷⁰ See Rudy Andeweg, 'Beyond Representativeness? Trends in political representation', *European Review*, 11, 2, 2003.
- ⁷¹ See Herbert Kitschelt, 'Citizens, Politicians and Party Cartellization', *European Journal of Political Research*, 37, 2000.
- ⁷² R. Katz and P. Mair, 'Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: the emergence of the cartel party', *Party Politics*, 1, 1, 1995; Webb, *The Modern British Party System*, p216.
- ⁷³ For example, BBC News 17.3.06 'How other countries fund politics'
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4817612.stm
- ⁷⁴ Cairney, 'Talk it like you walk it'.